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The Highway and Byways of Adult Education in Russia

Foreword By
Dr. V.S. Jha

by
Sohan Singh

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By
SOHAN SINGH

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FOREWORD

I had the privilege of being with Shri Sohan Singh during his visit to the U.S.S.R. and of comparing notes with him on some of our interesting observations. Shri Sohan Singh made a systematic and thorough study of the system of Adult or Social Education in the U.S.S.R. and I have pleasure in congratulating him on producing this very able and readable book. The main feature of this book is that the author writes from his personal knowledge and first hand experience of what he is writing about. He saw what he wanted to see and not merely what he was shown. He made personal contacts with and enquiries from many who were concerned with the work in the field at different levels. He has written this book when his impressions are fresh and he has at his disposal a wealth of information to support his observations. From what I was able to see in the U.S.S.R. in this sphere, I endorse the observations made by Shri Sohan Singh.

What impressed me most was the fact that in the U.S.S.R., the vital role of Social Education in a dynamic society has been consciously realised, clearly defined and rigorously applied in practice. One

may differ from the prevailing social and political ideology of the people of the U.S.S.R. but one cannot deny that all techniques of social education have been efficiently harnessed for fulfilment of their cherished social dreams. In our country the social significance is now being growingly realised. Education is concerned with life in all its aspects and endeavour is being made to ensure that educational programmes help people to rehearse social life as ideally conceived. I have no doubt that the workers in the field of Social Education in our country will find much food for thought in this illuminating book by Shri Sohan Singh.

V. S. Jha
President
Indian Adult Education Association

Vice-Chancellor's Lodge,
Banaras
24th May 1957

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is a record of what I saw and heard during my three weeks stay in Russia as a member of the team of Indian educationists that visited that country in September-October 1956. With the limited time on my hands I persuaded my eyes and ears to confine themselves to the field of adult education. For me that meant the grand highway of adult schools and libraries. As one who had met books on every turn in his life the temptation to see how Russian people got their books was irresistible. And then the Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge fascinated me. How glad I am I went into these byways.

I am grateful to the Union Ministry of Education for giving me a place on the team and also for permitting me to publish this booklet. It is again pleasant to mention how I cherish the memory of the many Russian men and women of great hearts who with eagerness and joy told me what I wanted to know, showed me what I wanted to see, and gave me all the help I needed.

I suppose, even my Russian friends will not regard it invidious if I single out one name out

of them, that of Ustinov Wladimir Ivanovitch. Ustinov started as my interpreter but soon helped himself to the position of my alter-ego. Not the least of this young man's charms was the freedom and imagination with which he used the English language—the freedom and imagination denied, I regret to say, to those like myself for whom it had been the medium of education. I once said, "Ustinov, you should marry." He replied, "You see, Mr. Singh, there are no candidates." And we both laughed—he to make light of the lack of candidates and I for how he said what he said.

Sohan Singh

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1 Adult Schools in Russia

Through the courtesy of the Ministry of Education R.S.F.-S. R., I was given an opportunity to visit a school for Working Youth in the 27th Baumansky Region, Moscow. The description of the School given below explains the work of these schools. I have added a postscript to give a wider background of these schools.

Along with my interpreter, I reached the School a little before 9 a.m. A neat little lady, slightly on the stoutish side, was there to receive us. She was Dora Volfovna, the Director of the School.

Dora led us to her office room on the first floor. We were five in the room—Dora and myself on the opposite sides of a small table. Besides me was my interpreter. Behind Dora, her assistant, a man who looked more like a Sargeant in the Army than a teacher, beseated himself on a dewan and by Dora's side was another lady, thin and tall, who played the role of a mute.

We quickly got over the usual formalities and I began to see her through the translucent haze of our interpreter. Outwardly coy and soft spoken, I saw in her a woman who genuinely liked her work.

After a brief introduction we settled down to the procedure I had in mind—I will ask questions which the kindly Director would answer. The picture I got out of the answers is that of an institution which is fulfilling a worthy role in the life of Russian workers.

The School

Dora Volfovna's School for Young Workers was founded in January 1944, after the 1943 Decree setting up such schools. It has 613 students ranging from class III to class X. Some of the students had had their studies disrupted during the War and others who had finished their elementary education of 4 years desired to take advantage of the new Decree to extend compulsory education in towns and cities to Class X.

A substantial number of students —45%—belonged to the age-group 23-29 ; 31% were in the 18-22 age-group, while 16% were below 18. Only about 8% of the students were 30 years or over. Nearly 40% of the students were women—many of them housewives. There are no special courses for women.

The working youth who enrolled themselves in the school received their education without paying any fees. The school library even supplied them with their textbooks, which of course could be read only in the library. They purchased the books if they wished to read them at home. The students thus had to search their pockets only for their stationery—minus the ink.

The students came to the school 3 days in a week, for 6 hours a day—a fairly heavy school day. In addition, they could come on a fourth day for *2 hours* for consultation—I suppose this is the Russian equivalent of educational guidance. These 2 hours are not compulsory, but I understand they are popular.

In winter the school closes for a short 10-days vacation and in summer 2½-months. Many students and teachers utilize the vacation for excursions.

Curriculum etc.

The curriculum, teaching methods and teaching material in the School differs but slightly from those in the ordinary schools for children. In the curriculum it cuts out drawing, physical culture and military training; retaining history, geography, literature, foreign languages (English, French and German),

Physics, Chemistry and Biology. In methods, the theory gives some emphasis on discussions, while the practice ignores this as an advice of perfection. The textbooks in all subjects in all classes are the same as in children's schools—only if a teacher finds a lesson too childish he can substitute it by another more in accordance with the tastes of the grown-ups. It was not possible to find out how far the 28 teachers of the school use their right to do so. Indeed, the educational authorities have now realized the pedagogical weakness of making grown-ups work on children's books and the textbooks prescribed in schools for working youth are now being suitably revised. Textbooks for Grade I to IV have already been revised and the work on those for Grades V to X is proceeding. There is much less "home-work" in this school as compared to ordinary schools and probably the courses also are shorter.

Before this year students took their examinations at the end of each class. But henceforth, as in the ordinary schools, there will be only two examinations in the school—one at the end of the VIIth Grade and the other at the end of the Xth Grade.

The students get paid holidays for their examinations, 15 days for the examination after Class VII and 20 days for the examination culminating in Class X.

Dora Volfovna's School was one of the 7 Schools for Working Youth in this region of Moscow. The entire city has about 200 such schools in its 26 regions. In this particular region there were 21 Correspondence schools for children. The schools are under the Regional Department of Education, which not only makes arrangements for the "inspection" of the School, but also sends from time to time subject specialists to tone up the teaching work in their particular subjects.

The School again

The Department was spending 5 lakh roubles on the school annually. I was getting envious, but there was more to come !

After nearly 2 hours of questions and answers and interpretations I expressed my desire to go round the School. There was no need to do so, for Dora Volfovna had herself planned so. The School had special class rooms for the teaching of various subjects. The Physics-Chemistry class room had a wealth in the shape of science apparatus and equipment (which include an epidiascope). Every room was rich in charts. I examined closely a few biology charts. They were coloured and large and clear. The one on the annelida worm, I saw, was a beautiful lesson in itself.

Schools and Industry

How did Dora's School come by such riches ? I learnt that the basic equipment was provided for in the generous budget. The students helped in making a few charts. But what is more, the industrial plants and firms from which the students hailed helped the School with a good deal of apparatus, equipment and—what appeared to me—even luxury items. The School had a television set donated to it by one of the industrial plants.

I believe the tender regard which industries in the Soviet Union have for the education of their workers is something unique in this country. Indeed, some industrial establishments are as good as educational establishments, so rich are they in schools, libraries, technical institutions and correspondence courses. They build schools which the Ministry of Education administers. They build special hostels for young unmarried workers where they can live and study without distraction. These hostels have small textbook libraries in them. They give a month's leave to their workers to take their examinations. They exempt them from night shifts. The Secondary Education Commission in India have also pleaded for a close cooperation between industries and schools, but so far the recommendation has remained in the region of pious hope.

Charts and ...

Besides its charts, every school room had pictures and

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photos in number on its wall. Lenin was always there and there were some photos of Stalin also.

Every regional Department of Education, it appears, had a Film Library from which films were supplied to schools in the region—ordinary schools and schools for Working Youth.

In all school rooms where classes were going on I was given a cordial welcome. The classrooms were full of students. I asked how the School could succeed in drawing such population. I was told that at the beginning of the School year the Director had conferences with the managements of industrial plants. It was obvious this coy-looking woman had persuasive talents. There were also some announcements in the papers.

After they leave the School

Back to Dora Volfovna's office I had some more curiosity in me remaining to be satisfied. Why do students throng to this School ? What does the School give them ? I was told that 90-95% of those who pass out from the School proceed to the University, where they receive some preference over the claimants who come by the highway of ordinary schools. The remaining got lifts in their own firms and that satisfied them. Thus the main function of the School was to prepare workers for University Education.

The School, it seemed, did not forget its students after they went on to new pastures, for there was a circlegraph in Dora's office giving an idea of what its erstwhile pupils became after they left her school. The graph was revealing—nearly half of the former pupils became engineers, a substantial number took to teaching and the rest found their vocations in medicine, economics and other fields.

Director's Turn

So far I had all my own way. Dora Volfovna could not leave me at that. She said she would like to ask some ques-

tions. I said I would welcome that. Her questions mainly pertained to adult education and literacy work in India. I explained to her that though we had 40-50 thousand literacy classes in a year we had not yet decided to make a mass attack on illiteracy, which, we hoped, would come in our Third Plan. The idea of mass attack perhaps enlivened her imagination and she warmed herself up to explain how 40 years back her own country was so illiterate and how all who could read lent their willing hands to teach the illiterate and thus helped to "liquidate" illiteracy in a few years. I said whenever we decided to launch a serious assault on the citadel of illiteracy we would no doubt benefit from the Russian experience.

In the visitors' book I wrote in Hindi something to the following effect :

"I was delighted to see this School, which is doing so much for the working youth. The spread of education among the masses is a sure foundation on which to build world peace."

As a parting gift from Dora I was presented with a copy of the geography textbook for the VI Class. I do not think I had in the short time I was in the school so betrayed my knowledge of geography, or rather the lack of it, as to make her think that I need to start from the VI Class. I believe she wanted me to have some souvenir of my visit to the school ; and so I thanked her heartily for this last of a beautiful series of courtesies and considerations.

Postscript

At present there are 4,000 Schools for Working Youth in the R.S.F.S.R. alone, with an enrolment of 15 lakh students. Similarly, there are 5,000 schools for rural youths with an enrolment of 6,00,000.

Some of the schools in the cities run double shift.

Correspondence Schools

The working youth in Russia can also take the education

imparted in these schools through correspondence courses. Some of the bigger factories run their own correspondence schools. In fact, the correspondence courses are gaining in popularity. Some schools have an enrolment of 3,000 correspondence students. The students passing through the correspondence schools have the same privileges as those who pass through regular schools. So far the correspondence courses have drawn their clientele from factories in industrial areas. The authorities are now working out methods of correspondence courses for rural youths.

At present there are about 100 correspondence schools in the R.S.F.S.R. with an enrolment of 95,000 schools.

Besides...

Besides, there is another type of schools called external schools. At this place my interpreter slightly faltered in his role and I could not gather as to what distinctive feature the external school had. However, it seems that these schools prepare the student for the Grade X examinations, doing the syllabus of IXth and Xth classes in one school year.

We have mentioned that there are only 2 examinations in the schools for adults—one at the end of the VIIth year and another at the end of Xth year. Students can take these examinations privately without joining a school.

Nearly 76,000 working youths passed their Xth Grade in 1955. In 1956 their number was 86,000.

The adult schools with their correspondence courses thus keep the highway of public education open to the Russian youth at all times. They are thus serving to maintain the equality of opportunity for education to men and women of all ages, and are thus serving a very useful and an essential function in the Russian Society.

2 Libraries in Russia

There are at present about 3.9 lakh libraries in Russia, containing between them about 130 crores of books.

These libraries can be divided into four groups. Firstly, there are libraries under the All-Union Ministry of Culture and its counterparts in the fifteen republics of the U.S.S.R. These libraries form the solid core of the public library system in the country and we will study them more closely a little later.

I School Libraries

The second group consists of libraries in the educational institutions under the Ministry of Education. The most important of these are the libraries in schools. A school library in Russia is not an advice of perfection, but a reality, and a necessary part of its school. Its book budget is determined by the number of pupils in a school. To give an idea of it, a rural school which we visited in the village of Saversky in the Leningrad district had 700 pupils on its rolls and a book budget of 5,000 roubles and 9,000 books in its library.

The Children's Publishing Houses and the Book Collectors—we are giving an account of these two institutions in a separate place—see to the quality and the range of books which go into school libraries and see to it that the books reach them.

The Central Children's Library in a district and the Children's Publishing Houses give professional guidance to school

librarians. They may, for example, recommend lists of books for various classes, or bring together the librarians in a conference. They hold children's Book Festivals to which school boys and girls and their parents come. The Russians have practically discovered a fine way of creating living contact between children and their authors by bringing the two in conferences to discuss books written by the authors. In Leningrad, e.g., such a conference is an annual feature and lasts a week. Again, some of the Children's Publishing Houses have a very interesting way of "pre-testing" their books. Before printing the substantial edition, a small number of copies of a book are sometimes struck off and sent to some schools for obtaining children's reactions to them.

The school librarian keeps a record of school children's reading. The school mentioned above had also library circles in grades III to grade X. I was told all schools are expected to have such circles.

This section on school libraries should be read along with that on Children's Libraries (Section IX below) given a little later, if a reader wishes to know what libraries mean to children in the U.S.S.R.

II Institutional Libraries

The third group includes libraries given to themselves by the workers and participants in a concern. We will have quite a number of occasions to comment on the healthy and robust interest taken by industrial and agricultural enterprises in the U.S.S.R. in the education of their workers. And so, every collective farm, most factories and cooperative societies, houses and places of culture etc. have their own libraries, which may range from the modest to the ambitious. One collective farm we visited in the Tashkant area had a library and also a reading room such as we hardly find in our cities. It is just a matter of interest and the Trade Unions in Russia have the education of their members almost at the centre of their work-programmes. As if to practise its own preaching,

the All Union Trade Unions Council has a large library of its own and a library department administers the libraries in the factories. These are the libraries located in the factories. Large factories have many deposit stations and mobile book stocks to feed them.

These institutional libraries are in the nature of public libraries, though their use is restricted to the institutional members. As such they have certain merits and also demerits. The merits are obvious. They may be able to give to their members a library service better than the average service that a universal public library may be able to give. Also, it nourishes a healthy attitude on the part of the institution towards the education of its workers and the attitude of workers towards their own continued education. It is this attitude which has made these libraries the centres of many cultural activities of the communities which they serve. It is this attitude which has given their libraries to 18,000 collective farms in the country, few of which have a book stock of less than 3,000 and some of which have 20,000 books on their shelves.

On the debit side, of course, we have to mention the possibility of overlapping of the services of the universal and the institutional public library to the loss of both. Again, it inhibits the growth of a unified library system for the whole of the country, the advantages of which even the U.S.S.R. cannot ignore for long.

III Special Libraries

In the fourth category, we have libraries meant for the specialists. These are parts of the establishments of Research Institutions, the academies, the various universities and the different ministries. They are essentially technical libraries. Perhaps they also extend their services to technical schools imparting training in their specialities.

IV General Libraries

We can now give a closer look to the general libraries

organised by the Departments of Culture in the Union and the various republics. There are more than 60,000 of them and may be classified as follows :

1. *The Lenin Library*, which is the National Library of the Soviet Union.

2. *State Libraries :* There are 15 republics in the U.S.S.R. and all of them have their State Libraries.

3. *District Libraries :* All the 151 districts in the U.S.S.R. have their libraries.

4. *Regional Libraries :* Each district is divided into various regions and, like the district, each region has its administrative set up. There are 5,500 regional libraries in the country. The number of regional libraries in an area, of course, depends on various factors. To give an idea, Moscow with its 7 million population has so far about 100 regional libraries, while Uzbekistan with its 11 districts and a population nearly the same as Moscow has about 300 regional libraries.

5. *Rural Libraries :* These are run by Rural Councils. Except in some areas, like Moscow and the "middle land", each village has its Rural Council. In some cases where a Rural Council covers three to four villages, the Rural Council Library may have its branches in the different villages. At present there are about 40,000 Rural Council libraries in the U.S.S.R. Together with the 18,000 libraries in the collective farms, it makes nearly 58,000 rural libraries in the countryside.

6. *Children's Libraries :* The existence of separate libraries for children is on the whole a distinctive feature in the Russian library structure. There are at present about 5,100 such libraries, mostly in the

cities and towns. In small regions and rural areas public libraries just have children's books among others.

7. *Libraries in the Cities :* A district library serves the whole area within its purview. But the city may be too big even for a big library serving it to the exclusion of other areas. The Ministries of Culture have, therefore, set up other libraries in the cities. The aim is to have one library for every 25,000 of population. A city may even have a Central City Library, like the one in Moscow. Tashkant with its nearly 5 lakhs population has a little more than 200 libraries.

V The Library Pattern in the U.S.S.R.

The seven types of libraries mentioned above, do not fall into a simple hierarchy. Though every villager in the U.S.S.R. can write a letter to any library in the country and get a book from there, the libraries are independent of one another, e.g., the Rural Council libraries are in no way branches of the regional libraries, and the latter of the district libraries. Yet they are held in a pattern, and the pattern is governed by a double strand—administrative and technical. Administratively, the various libraries are under the Republican Ministries of Culture. The District Councils have their Departments of Culture with library sub-departments. These sub-departments employ a number of library inspectors, the number varying according to the number of libraries in a district.

In the regions, the Regional Councils have Departments of Culture which are not further subdivided, so that the regional libraries look after the Rural Council libraries both administratively and technically.

So far as technical advice and assistance is concerned, the various libraries fall into a system. The Lenin Library is the superior source of such technical assistance. The Republi-

can Libraries, similarly, offer technical advice and assistance to libraries within their republics, and especially the city and district libraries. The district libraries in turn assist the regional libraries, and the latter the Rural Council and collective farm libraries. In cities where there are a number of libraries for children, there is usually one Central Library for Children to look after the technical aspects of children's libraries in the city. Similarly, bigger cities have Central City Libraries which assist libraries in their cities.

VI The Library functions of the Ministries of Culture

We will notice the aspect of technical assistance when we describe a few sample libraries. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note the library functions which the Departments of Culture perform. These functions are similar for all Departments of Culture, whether in the Union or the republics or the districts. We will, therefore, see how the Union Ministry of Culture functions with respect to libraries.

The Ministry performs the following functions :

1. It works out an all-Union plan for the creation of new libraries to fit into the general Five-Year Plan of the country.

2. Similarly, it plans personnel for the libraries and the training of the personnel.

3. The various libraries are supported financially by their respective administrations ; but the standards of expenditure, e.g., on staff, books, etc., are worked out by the Ministry of Culture.

4. It organises conferences of librarians. For example, a short while ago, the Directors of Republic Libraries met in Moscow to discuss the work of rural libraries ! Preparations are now proceeding for holding an all-Union Congress of Libraries.

5. It regulates the supply of books to libraries in the following four respects :

(a) There are many Copyright Libraries in the Soviet Union. The Ministry of Culture sees to it that the various libraries get their copyright sets.

(b) In Russia there is an institution called the "Book Collectors", which acts as an intermediary between libraries and the bookselling organisation. The Ministry of Culture supervises the functioning of the Book Collectors—both their receiving books from the book-selling agency and their supplying books to the libraries.

(c) It suggests to the publishing houses to bring out certain books which may be useful to libraries or library editions of popular books.

(d) It reserves rare books for libraries.

6. The Ministry of Culture brings out publications on libraries or on library techniques.

7· It supervises the working of Republic Libraries and gives the advice to them and appraises them critically and discusses with them any improvements which can be effected in the programmes.

8. It directs scientific research in librarianship, especially, keeping in view the Five-Year Plan in the sphere of libraries.

9. Lastly, it publishes progress reports of Libraries in Russia.

The functions of the Ministries of Culture in the Republics are similar.

The system is thus different from the one we are trying to set up in India, where the district libraries will be like branches

of the State Central Libraries, and, especially, where all libraries in a district will be the branches of the district library. It rather resembles the emerging pattern of our school education, where all schools will be under the various Departments of Education, but for professional advice and guidance they will look to the Extension Departments of the Training Institutes around which they may be clustered. For institutions benumbed with inertia and unblest with any rejuvinating ideas, such as our schools had been for a long time, it may be a good device. But it is a device which shows a despair of finding a formula which will make ideas and authority flow from a common source. I believe the Russian library system has within it the possibilities of a hiatus between progressive ideas of librarianship and library practices and I have pointed out a little later at least one place in which the possibility has become an actuality.

VII Training of Librarians

The training of librarians is adequately looked after in the U.S.S.R. The following types of institutions have between themselves covered all the need for trained librarians that arises out of the library plans.

(a) There are 3 Library Institutes in the country, one each in Moscow, Leningrad and Kharkov, which have a four years' course after grade X. We will describe the work of one of these institutes, the Leningrad Institute, shortly.

(b) Five of the Universities have library deparments which give a 5-year course after grade X. The universities emphasise the knowledge of literature to a greater extent than the library institutes.

(c) Two padagogical institutes, namely, that of Georgia and Bylorussia, have also library departments which give a 4-year course, similar to that of the Library Institutes at (a) above.

The above training institutions and especially the Uni-

versities and the Library Institutes prepare higher grade librarians, for example, those that take charge of district libraries.

(d) There are 61 library technicums in the U.S.S.R. giving a 3-year course after grade X. These technincums mostly train librarians for the rural libraries. They also sometimes give short refresher courses lasting a month or a month and a half.

All the above institutions also run correspondence classes.

(e) Several Practicums also train librarians. A practicum is an institution taking apprentices. For example, persons passing their Xth grade may be attached to good libraries which serve as practicums and get their practical training there for a year. Afterwards they can obtain training in the library technicums or do a correspondence course.

(f) Some special libraries also run their own courses. e.g., a science library may give special training in its branch of librarianship. Some of the larger science libraries have also courses in foreign languages for librarians.

Library Institute, Leningrad

We will supplement the above by a more detailed examination of the work of the Library Institute at Leningrad. The Institute had a very experienced and competent staff and runs three types of courses—the regular course, the correspondence course and the evening classes. The syllabus of the 3 types of classes is practically the same, except that there is not much place for practical work in the correspondence course.

The Regular Course

The regular course is divided into two parts—General and Special.

The general course is comprised as follows :

(1) History of Russian Literature and foreign literature.

(2) History of the U.S.S.R. and other countries.

(3) Pedagogy.

(4) Psychology.

(5) Foreign languages. The Institute has arrangements for teaching three foreign languages—German, French and English. A student is required to take one foreign language.

(6) Dialectical materialism, political economy and history of the Communist Party.

(7) Physical Culture.

The *special subjects* are as follows :

(1) Library administration and organization.

(2) Classification and cataloguing.

(3) Book selection and matters relating to book stocks.

(4) History of Libraries and Librarianship.

(5) Bibliography, including its history and practice.

(6) Service to readers.

(7) Work in rural and regional libraries—organisation of rural library service to readers.

Great emphasis is placed on practical work. Every student is required to put in 17 weeks of practical work, as follows :

(1) Classification, cataloguing and matters relating to book stocks—3 weeks.

(2) Service to readers—7 weeks in a district library.

(3) Work in rural and regional libraries—7 weeks.

The special course is divided into two faculties, of which a student is expected to take one—public library work and children's library work.

The courses in the two faculties are similar, except that more attention is paid in children's faculty to psychology, children's literature and work with children.

The Institute turns out 270 librarians, of which sixty take the children's library course. The 210 general librarians as a rule find employment in town and regional libraries. Some of them go to the republic and district libraries.

The children's librarians find employment in children's libraries and school libraries. There is a great shortage of children's librarians in the country.

The Correspondence Courses

The correspondence courses of the Institute are very well organized, and an entire department is devoted to it. The course differs little from the regular course given above, except that so far there is no arrangement for giving practical training to those who take the correspondence course. Also, the course is completed in 5 years instead of the 4 years for the regular course. 2,000 students take the course every year.

Evening Classes

The Institute also runs evening classes for librarians working in Leningrad. These Librarians are not permitted to take the correspondence course. The course extends to 5 years. The classes are held 4 days a week. 60 persons avail of the course every year. There are two shifts, morning and evening, to suit the convenience of library workers, who may be working in their libraries in evening and morning shifts respectively.

VIII The Public Libraries

We will now try to scan more closely the working of Public libraries in Russia. For this purpose I will take Children's Libraries separately from the general public libraries and also devote a separate section to the great Lenin Library.

For the sake of convenience and clarity I will deal with

the following aspects of public libraries :

(a) Library buildings, furniture and fittings.
(b) Book stocks
(c) Staff
(d) Library departments
(e) Service to readers
(f) Service to other libraries and librarians in general
(g) Finance

(a) **Buildings, Furniture and Fittings**

Russian librarians have yet to evince their sensitivity to good and functional library buildings. Libraries in the cities have a right to their distinctive style and design, but if there are any such libraries in Moscow, Leningrad and Tashkant—the three cities I visited—then I have missed them. In many cases even lighting fails to err on the generous side and the well-patronized reading rooms often give an appearance of readers huddled together. Making the best of a given building, high shelves and poor desks are the rule rather than the exception. Schools having good libraries may lack a proper reading room for children. I think, so far as this aspect of libraries is concerned, Russians are still living in the aftermath of the war ; for both in the matter of building and furniture and fittings they are carrying on on what appears to be the austerity standards. The furniture and fittings for the libraries is approved by the Departments of Culture in the regions under which the libraries function.

(b) **Book Stocks**

The Russian libraries are on the whole well-stocked with books. The library holdings show a per capita of nearly 10 books and on the average a library has a stock of over 3,000 books. Even allowing for such giants as the Lenin Library and certain University and academic and special libraries the level of stocks in Russian libraries is a proud achievement

of the Soviet people. I have not with me the statistics to enable me to calculate the per capita book use in Russian libraries, but from the data I have the indications are that if at all the average Russian reader falls short of the average English reader—the most voracious reader known—it can be only by a very small margin.

Librarians in Russia spend from 20 to 30% of their income on books. Relatively speaking, books are cheaper in Russia than in the U.K. and U.S.A.

Book selection rests mainly in the hands of the Librarian. Of course, he is guided in this by his readers' tastes and takes into consideration any specific suggestions by them. Sometimes the staff members meet to discuss books to be acquired. The advice of consultants in the Book Collectors' (an institution which we are discussing elsewhere) is available to him for consulting books for the library. The following are some other aids he can avail of for this purpose : (1) Catalogue of publishing houses (2) catalogue of Book Collectors of the republics concerned, (3) weekly lists of books published by the All Union Book Board, who also publish annual issues of their journal and (4) similar journals brought out by the Republican Boards.

Most libraries in the cities keep two Catalogues—the author and the classified catalogue. The classification system generally prevalent in the country seems to be a free adaptation of the Dewey system. The Lenin Library is now trying to work out the classification system based on Marxist philosophy. I felt a little excited at the news, but unfortunately I could not get any data to enable me to form even a hazy idea of what the classification would be like.

In a library in Moscow city which I visited and which had a stock of 1.15 lakh books, stock-taking was done every 5 years. In the stock-taking done in 1954 nearly 1,000 books were found to be missing. Human nature being what it is, there was some heat in the Regional Council under which the

library functions. But the books were eventually written off. Old books were forgotten while useful books were replaced. I believe this is after the general pattern in this matter.

(c) Staff

Except for bigger libraries, such as the Republican Libraries, the Central City Libraries and some of the larger District Libraries, like the Leningrad Library, which give professional guidance to smaller libraries, the numerical strength of the staff in the Russian libraries seems to accord with the standards accepted by liberal librarians in the West, namely, one staff member for every 10,000 books used. The staff salaries are not too high. My idea is—and here I speak subject to correction—that an average librarian's conditions of service in the USSR hardly compare favourably with those of an average teacher. However, the Russian libraries spend over 50% of their budgets, sometimes up to 60% of them on staff salaries.

In an average city library there are 3 levels of personnel : the Chief Librarian, the Senior Librarians, who are presumably departmental heads, and Assistant Librarians covering the rest of the professional staff. In the Tashkant Republic Library the qualified staff was also divided vertically into two departments: the librarians and the bibliographers. The librarians did cataloguing, classification and were in charge of acquisition and lending of books. The bibliographers compile lists of books and help readers in planning their reading programmes.

(d) Library Departments

The question of departmentalisation in a library arises only when the book-use attains a certain level, and this condition is satisfied only in city libraries or libraries of district and upper levels. The average city library in Russia has three departments—the lending department for adults, the lending department for children and youth and the department controlling the reading rooms. Sometimes, there may be a separate

department for classification, cataloguing and such other technical services.

It may be of some interest to note the distribution of staff among the various departments in a library I visited. It had a staff of 25 of whom 11 were professionally qualified and were distributed among its 4 departments as follows :

(a)	Cataloguing department	2
(b)	Youth work	2
(c)	Reading Rooms	3
(d)	Lending department	4

Out of the last 4, one was in overall charge of the Department and the other 3 were in charge of reading of workers, reading of those who were striving for technical education and reading of those who had higher education.

The larger libraries have, of course, more departments. As an example the Tashkant State Library has the following 10 departments :

(1) Book acquisition
(2) Classification and cataloguing
(3) Lending
(4) Children
(5) Books (including special books)
(6) Rare Books
(7) Service to readers
(8) Bibliography and reference work
(9) Technical assistance to libraries in the Republic
(10) Publicity and mass contact.

(e) **Service to Readers**

The public libraries in the city open from 12 to 14 hours a day. They close 1 day in 2 months for cleaning purposes.

Besides the usual service to readers entailed in reading in the library and lending for home reading, most libraries in Russia have also instituted Readers' Advisory Service. Larger libraries have separate reading rooms for the general readers, children and youth and more serious type of readers.

Almost every library has a separate shelf or shelves for new books. A list of new books may be displayed on a bulletin board. One bulletin board I saw had a number of small pockets on it in which cards for new books were inserted subject-wise.

The Lenin library, the republican libraries and some of the district libraries do not ordinarily lend books. But they do lend them—rare books excepted—to serious readers, or what we may call readers with a status, for example, teachers, research workers etc. The republican libraries frequently organize exhibitions within the library premises or outside. They organize seminars for readers to acquaint them with bibliographical resources of the library or the use of catalogues, bibliographical aids and reference books. Sometimes readers are taken around the different departments of the library.

The Tashkant State Library has also organized a Committee of 25 prominent readers to help in the work of the Library. The Committee organizes exhibitions, discussions and lectures to help the users of the Library. An interesting work which the individual members of the Committee undertake is to visit at their homes readers who fail to return books in time or otherwise evince a lower degree of conscientiousness about books.

Public libraries in Russia generally observes "closed access". I believe the enlightened opinion among Russian librarians favours open access and in course of time it may be introduced. This is perhaps an instance of the hiatus I spoke of resulting from the fact that the Russian libraries have separate administrative and technical authorities.

(f) Help to Libraries

The pattern of technical advice and assistance has been mentioned in the section entitled the "Library Pattern in the U.S.S.R."

The technical assistance is mostly of the following 5 types :

(1) The lower-rung libraries borrow books from the higher-rung libraries.

Generally, there is free inter-lending between libraries in Russia, but mostly the traffic is one-sided, as mentioned here. The flow of book-stocks from—say, the District Library to the regional libraries is not a matter of routine, it is only on a request. Perhaps that is why travelling libraries do not figure prominently in the Russian library structure. The Russian librarians ascribe it to the fact that the roads in the country are unfit for mobile library vans in winter months, when these libraries would be most welcome. Perhaps the ideology of the Soviets is at bottom responsible for this, for each Soviet tends to be self-contained in economic as well as cultural matters. There is ample proof of it in Russia. Or perhaps this is another symptom of the diarchy in the Russian library pattern. Even so, one could wish for a great enlargement of the scope of mobile libraries in Russia.

(2) The higher-rung libraries sometimes send their personnel to lower rung libraries to help them in some technical problems, for example, organization of the catalogue. Sometimes staff in the District Libraries go out to organize seminars for local librarians.

(3) The Lenin Library, the republican libraries and the larger district libraries frequently prepare bibliographies useful to other libraries. We will mention this later, again, in connection with the Lenin Library.

(4) The larger libraries also issue technical instructions for

the use of smaller libraries. They also publish literature on the organization of, and the activities suitable for, the smaller libraries.

(5) All enquiries from smaller libraries are attended to and answered promptly by the higher-rung libraries. In general, the latter consider it as one of their integral duties to assist technically the small libraries and some of the larger libraries, such as the republican libraries and even the Leningrad District Library, have separate departments for this purpose.

(g) Finances

The library finances in Russia are as adequate as in any other country. The libraries are maintained reasonably well, though not luxuriously. Generally, the distribution of expenditure in a library is as follows :

Staff	50 to 60%
Books	20 to 30%
Miscellaneous	20 to 24%

IX Children's Libraries

As stated earlier, the Ministries of Culture in the U.S.S.R. have a preference for setting up separate libraries for children. As a result, almost every region, specially in the cities, has a children's library. In cities like Moscow a crowded region may have even up to five children's libraries. Thus, the 26 regions into which the Moscow city is divided, have between them 86 children's libraries. A Central Library for Children is also there to give technical advice and guidance to those libraries. Besides, almost all public libraries have their children's wings or departments. The Children's Department of the Lenin Library and the Leningrad District Library deserve special mention in this connection.

I think it will be correct to say that the consensus of opinion among the librarians in India, U.K. or U.S.A. favours children's libraries as wings and departments of general public

libraries, and this for two good reasons. In the first place, children are good propagandists and it is a good strategy to bring the children to the library from where the parents can also draw books for themselves. Secondly, a separate children's library may mean an end to his membership of a library after a child passes into an age-group which the library does not cater to. If his library is a part of the public library he continues to be a member as a matter of course.

Russian librarians, however, have their own good reasons for having separate children's libraries. As the veteran librarian of the Tashkant State Library explained to me, library work with children requires special knowledge and approach and in this respect is akin to teaching. Again, library work with children demads work with individual children more than is demanded in library work with adults. He might have also added a third reason—children's librarians in Russia work in closer co-operation with schools than probably is the case in other countries.

My own feeling is that Russian librarians have found reasons for what they would have done anyhow. Special libraries for children are only one expression of a deeper attitude to children which finds its expressions in the children's houses and palaces, children's publishing houses, even children's shops and many other ways in which children are pampered to in Russia. Frankly, I like the Russians for pampering to their children.

I think I can best describe the activities of children's libraries in Russia by describing one of the libraries I saw in Moscow:

The Lomonosofa Regional Library for Children, Moscow: The Library was located on the first floor of a building. As we entered, a friendly and eager-looking middle-aged lady, who was introduced to me as Librarian, was there to receive us. We sat together in the small children's reading room to talk about her Library. Soon she gave me the impression that all

she knew of her Library could be mine only if I had time to imbibe it. A few children were there in the room, apparently reading while we were talking and casting furtive glances at the stranger who was in their room.

The Librarian told us that the Library was named after the famous children's author, Lomonosofa. It had 33,000 books and an annual budget of 1,20,000 roubles, out of which 31,000 roubles were spent annually on books. The Library had a staff of eight trained librarians, including herself.

The Library had two departments—one for children of age-group 7-10 and the other for the age-group 11-15. Each department had its reading room and lending section in which open access was the rule. The region to which the Library belonged had a population of 16,000 children of the age-group catered to by the Library. Out of these, 5,000 children were members of the Library, which lent out on an average about 200 books daily.

The Library lends books also to schools in the region from a book stock set apart for the purpose. There are 16 schools in the region, but the Library lends books to only 3 or 4 of them in its immediate neighbourhood. There is a Central Children's Mobile Book Stock which lends books to all schools and so it seems the work of this Library was only in the nature of additional help to a few schools it could manage.

The Library, of course, gives technical assistance to all schools in the region. For example, it lends posters to schools, the Library staff go out to schools to give talks, or the school librarians may come to the Library for a lecture or for some suggestions which may be useful in their own library work.

The Russian librarians show more imagination in their work with children than with adults. I have mentioned the open access for children. The Lomonosofa Library also organized reading for children in gardens and playgrounds in summer.

After talking to me about the Library for an hour or so the Librarian took me around the different "Departments", of the Library. The reading rooms, lending room and the corridors were all liberally embellished with large photographs of Russian authors for children, posters and bulletin boards. The reading rooms were full of children and created the impression of a living library. It was all pleasing to the eye—the only indifferent item being the inevitable ceiling-high shelves.

It was clear that the Librarian and her colleagues had devoted some efforts to make the road to books smooth and pleasant for children. I will mention some ten devices utilized in children's libraries in Russia to attract children to books.

Ten flowers for the honey bees

(i) There is the *personal assistance* the children's librarians everywhere in the world give to children.

(ii) Groups of children are held together by their common interest in some activity. For smaller children, *reading circles* are organized where books are read aloud to them. These are akin to story-hours in American libraries. For the elder children there are the Literary Circles where children share their joy in books and even write and share among themselves stories and verse. An interesting variation of this activity, very popular in the Soviet Union, is the meeting of children with their authors, where the children discuss with the author a particular book which he has written. It is understood that even the authors gain a lot by these meetings. The Central Children's Library I visited in Moscow holds regular children's literary parties.

(iii) *Pictures* are very popular in Russian Libraries. They are practically everywhere on the walls, on the guide cards, on the posters, etc. Pictures of authors adorn the rooms in practically all children's libraries and even the author cards and subject cards have pictures on them. The bulletin boards are also profusely illustrated.

(iv) Sometimes *filmshows* reinforce the taste for books in children. The children may have read the story which a film-show depicts or they may read it after seeing the film.

(v) *Book displays* are also the usual affair in all libraries, let alone children's libraries. However, there were two types of books which I saw displayed in a children's library in Moscow which interested me. A series published in a journal was extracted, illustrated and done into book form and displayed in the reading room for elder children. Similarly, an album was made out of pictures from a journal for children and displayed in a prominent place in the Library. For smaller children interesting new books were put together in a cardboard box open at one end so that the books could be easily seen and handled. Sometimes, the books were placed in such cardboard boxes subject-wise or author-wise.

(vi) Effective use is made of *Bulletin boards*, and particularly *posters*, to attract children to books. The bulletin boards contain pictures of writers with notices of their books. Book jackets may be displayed on bulletin boards. Further, sometimes children's reviews were pasted on bulletin boards. Interesting articles, children's verses and stories and library rules, too, found their places there.

Good use was made of posters to bring to the notice of children single books or groups of books by subjects or authors. A favourite type of poster contained questions and asked the children to select the books which would answer the questions or name the authors whose books contained the answers to the questions. Posters were profusely illustrated and sometimes contained maps also. Sometimes the questions were typed on small cards which were placed in pockets specially made for them on the posters.

(vii) *Charts* were used, as in children's libraries in other countries, to explain the arrangement of books in the library and sometimes to give library statistics.

(viii) Good use was made of *cards* arranged in trays. Besides the titles of books, the cards sometimes contained a line or two about or from the book, written or selected by children themselves. Sometimes they were illustrated with an illustration from the book. A short para from the author may also find a place on the card. Cards of recommended books illustrated in this way were put together in small trays. The books were sometimes graded, sometimes subjects and authors were recommended. Cards recommending books for particular grades were put in pockets under the number of the class on bulletin boards or cardboards hanging on the walls.

(ix) Sometimes *readers' handicrafts* were displayed in a successful effort to draw children's attention to the books which had enabled the reader to prepare the specimen. For example, an aeroplane was displayed on a shelf containing books on aeroplanes.

(x) Lastly, children are also sometimes given *prizes* for achieving proficiency in books. We have mentioned the questions on the posters. A child who would answer the greatest number of questions correctly gots prize.

Perhaps all the 10 devices mentioned above are used everywhere where work with children receives the devotion of librarians. But the Russian Librarian achieves a cumulative effect which has not found many parallels elsewhere. The effect of these devices is enhanced, because every effort is made to seek the co-operation of children in all the 10 devices mentioned above.

All the books which a child takes from this library were recorded on a card—really an 8-page note book—which thus contained the full record of his reading. These cards were arranged schoolwise and classwise.

Central Children's Library

We will close this section on the Children's Libraries in Russia by listing the services rendered by a Central Children's

Library. These services are, of course, additional to the normal facilities which they have for children.

These services are of three types. Firstly—the direct service to children. The librarians hold conferences and discussions with children, sometimes in co-operation with teachers, who watch children's interests and reading tastes, so as to select books on that basis. The posters and placards are discussed with children. Sometimes questions are circulated to children before the conference, so that they may prepare themselves to answer these questions in the conference. Recommended lists of books are circulated to children in these conferences on special occasions. Assemblies of small children are held for story-telling, reading of books etc.

Sometimes groups of children are introduced to the facilities which the library offers them. A whole class may be invited and given lessons on the use of libraries or reference books in the libraries.

Secondly, there are the services which the children's Central Libraries offer to schools and Pioneer organizations (children's clubs). The librarians study school programmes and recommend reading for children of various grades. They distribute posters to schools and pioneer organizations. Book exhibitions also help these institutions. Lists of books are compiled for various grades and sent to schools. We have mentioned that classes are invited to libraries. Along them came the class teachers, who no doubt benefit from their visit to the libraries.

Lastly, there are the services offered by the Central Libraries which directly help the children's librarians. For example, the model posters prepared in children's libraries may be copied or taken away for a short period by librarians within the sphere of influence of the Central Library. Exhibitions held by the Central Library are also useful to librarians. Children's librarians visit the Central Library and receive advice on various problems with which they are concerned. Some-

times, visits of librarians may be organized. Conferences of librarians and people interested in children's reading are also the usual feature of the work of the Central Children's libraries.

X The Lenin Library

The apex of the library structure in the U.S.S.R. is the great Lenin Library, founded in 1862 as a private library. It was accorded the status of National Library in 1925. By 1917 it had acquired a million books—a snail's speed as compared to its post-revolution progress, which by January 1956 gave it 18 million books in 160 languages of the world (including 85 languages of the U.S.S.R.) and housed in a towering 18-storeys stack. During 1955 it had 135000 registered readers and 18,50,000 visitors read 9573000 books. All that, if nothing else, gives it a place of honour and pride among the library giants of our age.

The Library has 18 departments dealing with the following subjects :

1. Lending rooms.
2. Rare books, i.e. books published mostly in 15th and 16th centuries.
3. Manuscripts belonging to the 11th or 12th centuries.
4. Microfilms. The Library has a stock of 18,000 micro-film books. The Department also has arrangements for micro-filming books.
5. Acquisition of books.
6. Classification and cataloguing.
7. International book exchange.
8. Military literature.
9. Literature for children and youth.
10. Readers' Advisory Service.
11. Bibliographical services.
12. Research and studies in librarianship.
13. Library training.

14. Library information and publicity.
15. Printing Department.
16. Staff.
17. Finance.
18. Other administration, for example care of building etc.

The library has a staff of 2,350, including 2,050 librarians. Many of the librarians possess higher certificates in librarianship. Indeed some of them have achieved a place of eminence among librarians in Russia. 80% of the library staff are women.

From its inception the Library was a *copyright library*, receiving one set of all books published in Russia. The number of sets it is entitled to receive was increased to 2 in 1922 and 3 in 1945. But that hardly suffices to appease its enormous book hunger, for a large number of books, Russian and especially foreign, are purchased by it and another large number is acquired through international book exchange. In these different ways, and also by micro-filming books difficult to obtain, the library added to its stock nearly a million books in 1955.

We may now enumerate some of the services rendered by the Library to its readers and to libraries and librarianship.

(a) *Services to readers*

The Library is *open* 14 hours a day and is closed on 18 days in a year—the last day of every month and 6 cleaning days a year observed by all libraries in Russia.

It has 16 *reading halls*. The number will be raised soon to 21, which will have a seating capacity of 2,800 readers at a time. Some of the reading halls are reserved for special types of readers. For example, there are reading rooms for children of grade III, halls for workers in the field of medicine, biology, etc., a hall for micro-film readers, a hall for periodicals, a room for persons interested in music etc.

The *route* of the readers' request to the stocks is mechanical. A "Book Railway" also brings books from the stacks to

reading halls. Still, owing to the colossal size of the Library an urgent request is met in about half an hour, while a non-priority reader may have to kick his heels for an hour and a half before he handles the book for which he has been longing. A reader can, however, keep a book on his seat for two weeks. The library staff is now seriously thinking of pressing modern electronic devices to shorten the time-interval between the readers' request for a book and its fulfilment. A book is located in the Library stacks by 4 numbers—the room no., the shelf no., the compartment no. and the serial no. of the book in the compartment.

The *preparation of bibliographies,* besides being a fine courtesy in itself, is one of the main justifications for the existence of reference libraries. And so the Lenin Library prepared and distributed about 1,30,000 bibliographies in 1955.

There are two types of services performed by the Lenin Library which are a little unusual for a National Library. First, it *lends books for home reading* for a month to men of status—academicians or eminent professors, research workers and leaders of the Communist Party and the Government. The Library serves 5,000 of such readers. As we have already seen, this is after the general pattern of reference libraries—State and large district libraries—in the USSR.

Secondly, the Linin Library has its *branches* outside the main library. These are located in Parks of Culture and Rest. For example, in the Palaces of Culture (Workers' clubs deluxe) or an Automobile Plant in Moscow, as well as other institutions, for example, in the Chekov Museum, Yalta. Ostensibly, these libraries help the Lenin Library to experiment in public library service to specific sections of population.

The magnitude of Lenin Library's service to readers has already been indicated.

(b) *Service to libraries and librarianship*

Like the Library of Congress in the U.S.A., Lenin Library

also *prints annotated cards*—though its work in this respect is not comparable in magnitude and utility to that of the Library of Congress. That is so, because the Book Collectors in Russia —an agency of distribution of printed books—also publishes cards which are useful to librarians. The Lenin Library cards are, therefore, not subscribed to on any large scale. They are useful only in respect of rare books and foreign books. The library is trying to work out economical mechanical methods of printing cards.

The Library *compiles* a number of *catalogues*, general and special, (for example, the Children's Catalogues, Catalogues of different branches of knowledge etc.), as well as annotated guides to best books and topical guides for the use of libraries and librarians. Some of the catalogues—for example, the one for children and another for regional libraries—serves functions similar to those served by catalogues published by the Wilson Co. in the U.S.A. The Library has so far prepared more than 325 such catalogues, many of them in different languages spoken in Russia. It is now working on a general catalogue of Russian books.

Book exhibitions are a strong point of the Lenin Library. In 1955 alone it organized more than 700 exhibitions. Besides, the Library has a continuous exhibition of the history of the book in Russia. These exhibitions are stated to be very popular.

The Lenin Library is of great *help to Russian libraries* in many ways. It lends books to any library on request, sends staff to State and District libraries to lend them a hand in difficult technical problems, organizes conferences of librarians and prepares technical literature of help to Soviet librarians, for example, the cataloguing rules published by it. It is now working out a scheme of classification to suit the Soviet genius, which will, of course, be eagerly awaited by those who are interested in the classification of knowledge.

The Library also issues *annual library reports*. These

reports do not deal so much with the work of libraries during a year—this is the function of reports put out by the Ministries of Culture—but deal with technical problems which may have been confronted and tackled by Russian librarians during the year.

The Library has an interesting auxiliary department dealing with *book "hygiene"*. Its work in preserving books and restoring documents and research in new and better ways of giving a new lease of life to dead paper and dilapidated books is saving treasures which only librarians and scholars can appreciate.

Finally, the Lenin Library is the foremost *centre* of *library research* in the U.S.S.R. Some of the projects on which the staff was busy in the beginning of October, 1956 were :

the history of some of the larger libraries in the U.S.S.R. ;

a history of books and bookcraft in Russia—this is perhaps correlated with the perpetual exhibition of Russian books mentioned earlier ;

readers' tastes ;

experiments in travelling libraries ;

library careers etc.

The results of research are published in monographs or brought together in multiple works or journals. A large literature of this type has accrued to the credit of the Lenin Library research staff.

I believe librarians everywhere in the world will agree that the Lenin Library has deserved well by that part of humanity which lives in the Soviet lands. No wonder the eyes of my friend Levin of this library were beaming with pride when he told me that his library had won the coveted Order of Lenin in 1944 and who is the Librarian who will not understand the light in his eyes !

3 Society for Dissemination of Knowledge

Planning and, following from it, organization on an ambitious scale now seems to have entered the soul of the Soviet people. The Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge, a voluntary organization whose work we will now describe, is a fine example of this Russian Culture-trait.

As in other countries, so in Russia the War created a ferment favouring the greater widespreading of the goods of life, and education is undoubtedly one. In Russia a few learned men met together and discussed the possibility of a vast organization to bring together in lecture halls those who knew and those who wanted to know. Accordingly, the Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge came into being by a Charter on 7th July, 1947.

Organization of the Society

At present the membership of the society exceeds 3,50,000 and is organized on the principle of what the Russians call 'democratic centralism'—which is simply that the higher rung body is composed of delegates from the lower rung bodies. Every year members in a region meet and elect delegates for the districts. The district delegates meet in a conference once in two years to elect delegates to compose the republican branches of the Society and the republicans congreses select their delegates once in 4 years to select the All Union Congress of the Society. The number of delegates composing the various rungs of the Society differ from election to election and is determined more or less by the decisions of the All Union Board

to be mentioned shortly below. For example, the All Union Board recommends to the district boards to select 150 to 200 delegates for each district conference. The districts in turn fix a number for the regions to send their delegates. To give an idea of the strength of the Congress at various levels, for example, the Tashkant Republican Congress of the Society has 460 members. The All Union Congress elected last in 1954 is composed of 570 delegates.

At each rung of the Society—the regions, districts, republics and the All Union level—the members select the Boards to conduct their business. These Boards are camposed of 50 to 75 members. The All Union Board has a strength of 78 members.

The functions of the Board are :

(a) Discussion of the work of the Society and especially how its plans are being fulfilled at each level.
(b) Organization and implementation of the plan.
(c) Maintenance of the quality of lectures.
(d) Organization of publicity.
(e) Discussion of the work of the lower units.

The All Union Board of the Society is at present composed of 78 members. The Board meets twice a year to discuss the affairs of the Society. Some Republican Boards meet more often. For example, the Tashkant Republican Board meets 4 times a year. The All Union Board elects an Executive Committee, called the Presidium, consisting at present of 19 members who meet more frequently and thus manage more closely the work of the Society. The Boards of the Society in the various republics and districts similarly select their own Presidiums.

The functions of the Presidiums are as follows :

(a) To maintain the statistics of the work of the Society.
(b) To study and take appropriate action on the reports of the lower-rung committees.

(c) To prepare the plan of lectures for a whole year.

(d) To decide which lectures to publish. Sometimes the text of lectures are discussed.

(e) To take steps to increase membership of the Society.

(f) To prepare report of work to be presented at the meeting of the Board.

(g) To maintain the lecture halls of the Society etc.

Recently, branches of the Society have been extended to the regions, which are sub-divisions of districts. Even institutions having 15 to 20 members of the Society may organize their own bureaux. But, of course, these bureaux cannot have Boards or Presidiums. Boards exist only in branches having a membership of 40 or more. The regional Boards have no Presidiums.

At every stage of the hierarchy a Board has various sections under it in charge of various branches of knowledge. The number of sections a Board will have will depend on its needs and resources of lecturers. The All Union Board, for example, has 40 sections and each section is composed of about 35 to 40 persons, so that almost every branch of knowledge is well looked after. A section need not be composed wholly or mainly of the members of the Board. Each section has on it a "referent", who is an expert in his branch of knowledge and is paid for his services to the Society.

Working of the Society

It is the business of a section to prepare the provisional plan of lectures to be delivered in the area for which its Board is responsible. This plan is then approved by the Presidium and finalized by the Board. It may be mentioned that the plan is always elastic enough to make room for lectures of topical importance. For example, the fact that a particular plan was prepared before the Suez Canal Crisis came on does not mean that the Soviet citizens will be deprived of lectures on this topic.

Other functions of the section include providing useful hints for lecturers and suggestions of approaches to lectures. Each and every lecturer also submits before hand his lecture to the proper section which is then scrutinized by the "referent" to see that a certain standard is maintained and the listeners really benefit from it.

A year's lecture plan is thus approved by a District Board of the Society, keeping in view the problems before the country as well as local needs. The District Board plans are approved by the Republican and All Union Boards.

The organization of the Society is thus quite elaborate, but perhaps a less elaborate organization will creak and break under the vast scale of its work. Since the beginning of its work in 1947 the Society has handled over 7½ million lectures. In 1955 alone 1.6 million lectures were delivered under its auspices and the programme for 1956 aims at 2 million lectures.

The Lectures

It will be interesting to note the distribution of the 1.6 million lectures delivered in 1955. It is as follows :

History	2,24,000
Philosophy	47,000
Economics	28,000
International Affairs	3,96,000
Biology and Medicine	1,00,000
Agriculture	1,94,000
Technology	1,06,000
Communist Ideology	1,00,000
Literature & Art	77,000
Chemistry, Physics	68,000
Law, Pedagogy & Miscellaneous	1,90,000

The proportion of lectures in each branch of knowledge of course is affected by the tasks imposed on the Russian

Society by their Five Year Plans. For example, in 1956 there has been a great emphasis on agriculture. We thus find, for example, that in Uzbegistan Republic 37% of lectures in 1956 pertained to agriculture. The other branches of knowledge claim the following percentages :

15% medicine, literature, art.

19% education, history, philosophy, science and technology etc.

The various groups of population are catered to equally in these lectures. For example, of the 60,000 lectures planned by the Uzbegistan Branch of the Society, 47,000 had been delivered up till 1st September, 1956. The distribution of these 47,000 lectures is as follows :

1. Lectures delivered in collective farms and other rural areas ... 26,500
2. Lectures delivered in factories and plants ... 10,400
3. Lectures delivered in urban areas ... 10,100

The lectures fall under 3 classes. Firstly, there are the lectures for which the lecturers receive no payment. These form nearly 2/3 of all the lectures. The lectures delivered at collective farms, and perhaps some other lectures also, fall in this class. Many lecturers decline any payment for their lectures and consider it their privilege to be of help to the Society.

Secondly, lectures or lecturers are sometimes invited by institutions who pay for it at the rate of 125 roubles for a lecture. Of this amount 65 roubles go to the lecturer and the rest of the amount is retained by the branch of the Society which organizes the lectures for its administrative expenses.

Thirdly, there are the lectures open to the general public on payment of admission fee which is usually a rouble per lecture and sometimes two roubles. 40% of the proceeds of

such lectures go to the lecturer. He is also assured of a basic minimum, which in the case of a non-academically qualified lecturer is 65 roubles, for a Kandidat (equal to our M.A.) is 100 roubles, and for the owner of a Doctorate it is 150 roubles. A still higher sum is paid to the proud possessor of a higher distinction in his field.

The lecturers are selected by the local branch of the Society and intending lecturer may also apply to the appropriate section and the local branch of the section may recommend him to the Board. I was told that good care is taken to select only able lecturers. Sometimes lecturers from other countries may be invited to give lectures, specially when they happen to be in Russia.

Some of the best lectures are published by the Society. The lecturer receives the usual payment for it—which in USSR is fixed and generous—except that the Society retains for itself 30% of it to cover its own expenses.

Finances

We are now in a position to take a view of the income and expenditure of the Society. The Society receives no assistance from the Government, and its only sources of income are three—the income from lectures and publications which we have already noticed and membership fees. All members pay a subscription of 10 roubles a year and an initial admission fee of 20 roubles.

Membership

A person becomes a member of the Society on the recommendation of two existing members or on the recommendation of an institution which is a bureau of the Society. A member has the following privileges :

(a) Only a member of the Society can give lectures.

(b) The Society may print good lectures and pay the member for it.

(c) A member has free entrance to lectures for which non-members have to pay.

(d) A member is privileged to attend the meetings of specialists which are sometimes called for reading special lectures for the benefit of lecturers.

It will be noticed that the income from membership and lectures accrues only to local—district or regional—boards. The local boards pay 2% of their income to the Republic Boards for the organizational expenses and the Republic Boards in their turn pay 4% of their income to the All Union Board.

Expenditure

The expenditure falls under two broad heads—Payment for lectures and organizational expenses. The latter include payment to workers of the Society. We have already noticed payment to referents. Members of the Board as such do not receive any payment, but some of the members are required to devote the whole of their working time to the Society and naturally are remunerated for it. For example, the all Union Board has the services of 5 whole time persons—the Secretary of the Board and 4 Deputies of the Chairman. Of these 4 Deputies, one is in charge of administration, while the other 3 divide between themselves the responsibilities in the various fields of knowledge. In the Republics only two or three members of the Boards may be working whole-time for it and be paid for their work. The District Boards, as a rule, pay only their Secretaries, except for the bigger and more prosperous District Boards, like the Leningrad District Board, which has also a paid Assistant Secretary.

One other head of expenditure or income may be noticed. The All Union Board of the Society sometimes renders assistance to weaker Republican Boards and a Republican Board may similarly assist weaker District Boards. This is an important advantage of having an organization on the scale on which the Society is organized.

Lecture halls

Most of the Districts and even Republican Boards own their own lecture halls. The Tashkant Republican Board, for example, owns 71 lecture halls. 12 of them are in Tashkant itself, 4 in Samarkand and the remaining in the rural districts. Some of the lecture halls are well-equipped with audio-visual aids equipment.

The Leningrad Branch for the Society

Some of the local branches of the Society have acquired a place of their own in the cultural and even the institutional life of their communities. For example, the District Board of Leningrad, which I visited, had a large palatial building all to itself—that way cultural institutions in Leningrad are extremely lucky. It has 3 lecture halls, one with a seating capacity of 750, fitted with blackboards, epidiascopes, projectors and projecting rooms. I was told that as far as possible all lectures are suitably "visual-aided". I saw in the office a large chart showing the week's programme for the last week of July. This covered a wide range of lectures.

The Leningrad District Branch has its own publishing office. The lectures were, of course, not brought out in precisely the form in which they were delivered. They were edited and even expanded in the printed form. Also, some of these lecture pamphlets were displayed in the office of the Branch. Some of the subjects covered pertained to atomic physics, mathematics, museums etc. The pamphlet on museums contained illustrations of some noteworthy exhibitions in the museum described.

There is no doubt that among the cultural agencies in Russia the Society for Dissemination of Knowledge occupies a place of honour. It is an embodiment of the ideal of Vidya Dan which has a cherished tradition in India.

4 The Book Business in the U.S.S.R.

The part which books play in the mental and moral nourishment and growth of men, women and children entitles them to the first place among the instruments of education. No wonder, therefore, if a student of adult education going to the land of a new civilization finds his curiosity enkindled to know how books are published there and how they find their way to their readers.

I Book Production

The U.S.S.R., according to the Unesco publication "Basic Facts and Figures", is the largest book-producing country in the world. In 1955 it published 50,109 titles, leaving Japan, the second largest book-producing country with its 19,837 titles published in 1955, way behind. The business of book production in the U.S.S.R. is "socialised". Any public organization can have its publishing house. Accordingly, most Ministries, many large industries, academies of sciences and some social organizations, like the Young Communist League, have their publishing houses.

The work of the Ministries of Education is particularly interesting to educationists. For example, the Ministry of Education in the R.S.F.S.R. runs a children's publishing house which is doing the finest work of its kind anywhere on this globe. It also runs a text-books publishing house. Then again, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, itself under the Ministry of Education, has its own publishing house.

But the greatest single group of publishing houses is managed by the Ministries or Departments of Culture. There are at present 267 publishing houses in the U.S.S.R. Out of these 110 are under the Ministries of Culture concerned as follows :

(a)	Publishing houses in Moscow run by the Ministry of Culture in the R.S.F.S.R. ...	14
(b)	Publishing houses in the republics (every republic has 2 to 3 publishing houses). ...	33
(c)	Publishing houses under the Ministries of Culture in the autonomous republics. ...	20
(d)	Publishing houses owned by District Departments of Culture—mostly in the R.S.F.S.R. ...	43
	Total :	110

The Main Editorial Board

The work of all these 110 publishing houses, in fact of all the 267 publishing houses, is regulated directly or indirectly by the Main Editorial Board under the all-Union Ministry of Culture. The 14 State Publishing Houses in Moscow are administered directly by the Board, while the rest are administered by it through the Ministries or Departments of Culture concerned.

The 14 State Publishing Houses in Moscow publish respectively the following type of literature for the whole country :

(i) political literature ; (ii) fiction ; (iii) science (theoretical and applied) ; (iv) drama ; (v) fine arts ; (vi) law ; (vii) agriculture ; (viii) geography ; (ix) physical culture and support ; (x) music ; (xi) foreign literature (it is this publishing house which is now translating the works of Tagore, Prem Chand and Prime Minister Nehru into Russian) ; (xii) foreign languages (for translating Russian books into foreign languages) ;

(xiii) national and foreign language dictionaries and finally (xiv) the registration of all books published in the U.S.S.R.

Its Functions

The Main Editorial Board performs five functions as follows :

1. The Board directs the work of the 110 publishing houses and coordinates their publishing plans with those of all other publishing houses in the country. The plans of publishing houses in the republics are prepared in the first instance by the republican Ministries of Culture and the publishing houses in the republics. These are, later on, approved by the Board.

The plans are prepared keeping in view the needs and interests of all sections of the public—farmers, engineers, technicians etc. and are of three types as follows :

(a) Books to be published during the plan-year. Each book is listed giving its author, title, number of pages, volumes, illustrations and number of copies in the edition.

(b) Books to be published during the next year. The plan gives the author, title, subject and approximate number of pages for each book. The strength of the edition is added when the book is incorporated in the year's plan.

(c) Books to be produced during the course of the next 5 years. The plan lists for each book, its subjects, likely author, and, very roughly, the number of pages it will contain.

The "next-year" and especially the "5-year" plans are necessitated by the fact that some books, for example multi-volume works, anthologies, dictionaries, etc., take a long time to bring them to a stage where the manuscript can be handed over to the printer.

The plans of the 110 publishing houses are further co-ordinated by the Board with the plans of all the publishing houses in the country to avoid duplication etc. For example,

fiction is produced by the State publishing houses under the Ministries of Culture, the publishing houses run by the Young Communist League and the Council of Writers. The Board examines the plans of all these organizations to see that there is no overlapping anywhere.

2. The Board is also responsible for laying down the norms of various types of works involved in publishing books. For example, the Board lays down the rights and duties of publishing houses, it issues instructions to publishers on how to propare manuscripts for printers, it regulates agreements between publishing houses and authors and payment to authors, it lays down standards of illustration and book craft in general and it tries to work out ways and means by which the cost of books can be reduced.

It may be interesting to know that the cost of a book in the U.S.S.R. breaks up as follows :

(a) Payment to author	25% of the cost
(b) Paper	40 to 42% of the cost
(c) Printing	25-30% of the cost.
(d) Other expenditure, i.e. payment to editors, proof-readers etc.	5-7% of the cost.

It will be seen that there are two ways open to Russian publishing houses to reduce the cost of a book—by reducing the cost of paper and printing. Russian publishers are, therefore, deeply concerned in the manufacture of new and better types of printing machines.

The price of a book, of course, is not determined by the Main Editorial Board. This is the responsibility of the State Commission for fixing Prices, on which the publishers and booksellers are represented and which considers the suggestions of publishing houses for fixing the prices of particular books. For this purpose the publishing houses forward to the Commission the rough prints of books before they are published.

For the purpose of fixing prices of books, as for other book trade purposes, the sheet—foldable to 24 book pages—is the unit. Subject to considerations, such as the size of the type, matter, such as tables and diagrams, as well as the number, quality and colouredness or otherwise of the illustrations, the price of various types of literature works out as follows :

Political literature	10 kopeks per sheet
Fiction	15-20 ,, ,,
Popular science	30 ,, ,,
Science (due to diagrams and illustrations.)	60 ,, ,,

(A kopek is equal to 1/100th of a rouble ; a rouble is roughly equal to Rs. 1/2/-).

Generally, I was told, the cost of a book accounts for 68% of its price ; 25% of the price goes to the Book Selling Organisation as its commission. Of the rest 2% goes to the State and the remaining 5% or so goes to brighten the balance-sheet of the publishing house. As the price of a book is fixed by the Price Fixing Commission on general principles, a well-administered publishing house may be able to snatch another quantum, from the 68% meant for covering the cost, for its profits.

3. The Board is specially interested in the supply of paper and other material needed by the publishing houses to carry out their approved plans. It is in a special position to press the needs of publishers on the authorities as it is in possession of overall needs of all of them.

4. The Board also regulates the strength of the staff of the publishing houses. It has, of course, more power in this respect in so far as the staff of the 14 publishing houses directly under it are concerned. But its suggestions in this behalf are received with respect by other publishing houses.

5. Finally, the Board determines the budgets of the pub-

lishing houses—of all the 110 publishing houses under the Ministries of Culture, in general, and of the 14 publishing houses directly under it, in particular. Some publishing houses are vulnerable in this respect. For, since the number of copies in an edition are determined by the size of the reading public and the book prices are determined by the State Commission in accordance with general principles, some small edition books are bound to strain the finances of smaller republican publishing houses. But the book production organisation in Russia can absorb these strains. And so, while the 14 publishing houses producing large editions of Russian books for the entire country earn 10-15% profit, the 110 publishing houses between them can claim a 4% profit on their investment.

Publishing Houses-Organization

The publishing houses have usually three departments: the editorial, printing (where the publishing house owns a printing shop) and the administrative departments. Besides publishing books, many publishing houses also publish newspapers and periodicals. In such cases there may be a newspaper or newspaper-and-periodical department separate from the book department and every periodical or newspaper brought out by the publishing house may have an Editorial Board for itself. The Book Department is organized internally having regard to affinity of subjects. The departments are in charge of Deputy Directors under a Director for the whole organization.

Some publishing houses are rich enough to have their own rest houses for workers, pioneer camps or kindergartens. Accordingly, they have a separate department, or sub-department under the administrative department, in charge of these matters.

The larger publishing houses can, of course, specialize to an extent not permissible to smaller units. A most happy example of this is the Children's Publishing House in Moscow. It had a staff of 40 which included the Director, his 5 Deputies and 34 specialists in various subjects. The main publishing work is carried out in 8 departments concerning :

(a) pre-school children
(b) elementary school children
(c) high school children
(d) classical literature
(e) science
(f) different countries and nationalities
(g) foreign literature and
(h) book illustrations.

Each department has specialists to select books to be published.

Besides these departments, the Publishing House has five other departments as follows :

(a) **Department of Reading Rooms and Conferences**

This Department maintains reading rooms where *discussions are held with children* as to what books they like and why. Here, too, parents, child educationists, librarians and children's writers come for discussions on children's books and reading tastes.

(b) **Publicity Department**

This Deparment organizes *exhibitions of children's books.* It invites children to write their impressions about and appreciation of specific books. During 1955 it had received 40,000 letters of this kind. It makes out lists of books in different subjects suitable for children of different ages. An important work of this Department is the annual organization of Children's Book Weeks, when childrens's writers and poets meet children in all towns of the country and discuss with them their books and reading of children.

(c) **Department of Children's Literature**

This Department is concerned with the theory, history, and critical study of children's literature. It brings out books on these subjects and bibliographies of children's books on various subjects. It also investigates problems in various

fields of children's literature. At the time of our visit to the House the department was engaged on a study of science books for children of various ages.

(d) **The Department of Writers & Artists**

This Department keeps a register of children's writers and artists and keeps in touch with them. It organizes seminars and training courses for young writers.

(e) **Library**

The Publishing House has a library of 115,000 children's books including old books, modern books, foreign books and books on all aspects of children's literature, for example, books for children's writers etc.

Discovery and Training of Authors

We have mentioned above the training of children's writers by the Children's Publishing House, Moscow. In general, the publishing houses in Russia consider it as their duty to discover and train young authors. To give an example, the Publishing House of the Young Communist League, which publishes one newspaper, 14 monthlies and other periodicals and 250 books in a year, accepts works from about 20 new authors in a year for publication. It publishes editions of about 10-25 thousand books of poetic works and of about 90,000 copies of prose works by young writers. Some of these books turn out to be disappointing in terms of the publishers' rewards, but it seems the publishing houses in Russia are prepared to face it in a stoic spirit.

The young writer is first expected to try his pen in periodicals. Or a publishing house may bring out books containing works by young authors. The Union of Soviet Writers have a Board for Young Authors which assists them in modern techniques of writing. Conferences are held every year, where young writers meet their more experienced and respected colleagues aud discuss their problems with them. Conferences are held in collective farms, palaces of pioneers, etc. where

writers meet their readers and obtain the latter's reactions to their writings, and thus learn to use their pen to greater advantage. Then, again, as mentioned earlier, some publishing houses organize seminars and training courses for writers.

Payment to Authors

Russia is a paradise for authors. In the first place, the payment is generous, being about 25% of the cost. In fact the publishing houses think it is too generous and would like to have it reduced to 15%. Secondly, as the entire book production of publishing houses is purchased at once by the Book-selling Organization, which we will describe shortly, he gets the whole payment as soon as the book is published and has not to heave sighs for it.

The payment is by sheets (24 pages) and ranges from 1,500 to 24,000 roubles a sheet. A new author, however, may not receieve a payment of more than 3,000 roubles a sheet. Different types of literature are paid at different rates. Scientific literature carries the highest remuneration. A Council goes into the manuscripts submitted by a writer and advises the Director of a publishing house on the payment to be made to the author, who receieves 25% of it at the time he enters into a contract with the publishing house, 35% when the manuscript submitted by him is approved and the rest 40% as soon as the book is published. He gets an additional sum if he is fortunate to have his book run into a second edition.

Training of Editors for Publishing Houses

There are 4 types of institutions for training the personnel of publishing houses. Firstly, the Moscow University has a Faculty of Journalism which has a Department for training publishers and editors of social and economic literature. The course lasts 6 months and comprises editing, history of publishing, matters concerning printing and publishing, proof reading, principles of book making, etc.

The editing and publishing personnel for scientific litera-

ture is taken from the colleges, universities and institutions of higher studies directly, but such persons have to undergo a special course lasting from 3 to 6 months for gaining competence in editing. It is felt that a course of 6 months should be the minimum.

Secondly, there are the technicums giving similar courses, though on a somewhat lower level. The courses in the technicums are either three years courses after the VIIth grade or two years after the Xth grade.

Thirdly, employees of some publishing houses can take short courses of the duration of a month or so in the institutes and technicums.

Finally, practically all publishing houses serve as practicums (apprentice training centres).

II Book Distribution

There are two channels of distribution of books and three of periodicals in the U.S.S.R. All the three are completely under State control. A large number of periodicals are subscribed to and hence pass into the consumers' hands through the post offices under the Ministry of Communication. The unsubscribed journals, unless they have a foreign destination, are sold through the kiosks which are the extremities of the general bookselling agencies.

The two book distribution agencies are : the Main Bookselling Organization under the Ministry of Culture and the International Booksellers under the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The latter supplies all demands for Russian books from other countries, and also imports books from other countries. The former is the sole agency of book distribution within the country and in this section we will confine ourselves to a description of this organization alone.

There are four rungs in this Organization. The highest

rung is the Main Board for Selling Books. Next come the Republican Boards and then the District Bookselling Boards, which really constitute the pivot of the whole system. From the District Bookselling Boards books go, on the one hand, to Book Collectors, which supply books only to libraries and, on the other, to book shops etc., which supply books to the public.

We will now look for more details about these four rungs of the organization.

(a) The Main Board for Selling Books purchases the entire production of all the publishing houses and makes payment to the publishing houses through the State Bank. In 1955, it is understood, the total investment in this way amounted to 2½ billion roubles. After purchase the books are sent to District Boards for sale.

Besides purchase and distribution of books, the Board has the following other functions :

(i) It exercises supervision over the republican and district boards. For example, the Head of the Administrative Department may visit the boards and make recommendations on their working. The inspection keeps the boards streamlined in their work. The Main Board also gives technical help to the lower boards. It may make rules concerning the personnel of book boards and book shops, may organize conferences, seminars or inservice training courses for them.

(ii) An important function of the Main Book Board is to discuss the details of books to be produced by the publishing houses, for example, the titles and, specially, the number of copies in an edition. The Main Board also sends plans and annotated lists put out by the publishing houses to their branches and publishing houses are generally guided in their production work by the needs of the public as communicated to them by the District Bookselling Boards through the Main Bookselling Board.

(iii) The Main Bookselling Board also arranges publicity of books through posters, lists, etc.

The Main Bookselling Board has five Departments.

1. Department of Fiction
2. Department of Scientific & Technical Literature
3. Department of Political, Economic and other Literature
4. Administration Department
5. Planning Department

Within these Departments there are specialists who have specific functions to perform. For example, the Head of the Department dealing with scientific literature, keeps contact with all publishing houses and their programmes and he deremines the size of an edition. He is responsible for proper annotations of forthcoming books and is also responsible for distribution of books to local booksellers. He has catalogues of scientific literature published by the various publishing houses and knows what stocks of each book there are in the various bookshops in the country.

(b) **Republic Bookselling Boards**

These have functions similar to those of the Main Book Board, but concern themselves only with books published by the Republican Book Publishing Houses and Publishing Houses in the autonomous republics.

(c) **District Bookselling Boards**

The main responsibility for selling books falls on these boards. They receive books, not through the Republican Book Boards, but directly from the publishers on instructions from the Main Book Board, which has fixed their quota on their own request. This saves some expenditure. As we have seen, the Central Book Board advises a publishing house on the strength of an edition solely on the advice of District

Boards. If a book is a bad bargain it is the District Bookselling Board that suffers, because the quota of books sent to it was based on its own demand.

The various bookshops give their orders directly to the District Board and the District Board sends the consolidated demand of all bookshops in the District to the Main Book Board.

(d) The District Board distributes books through the following agencies :

(i) The Book Collectors. This organization sells books to libraries at cost price. In many cases books are sold out in Russia like the proverbial hot cakes and in the ordinary way libraries may in the course of their formalities miss some books altogether. The Book Collectors act as reservoirs, taking books off public circulation and reserving them for the libraries. The Book Collectors also make out book cards which are very useful to libraries in building up their catalogues.

(ii) Regular bookshops. Bookshops in Russia have a comprehensive scope. They sell general books, school books, posters, charts, stationery, pictures and even statues.

As stated above, books generally sell quick in Russia. Some books, however, do turn out to be disappointing and lie unsold on the shelves of bookshops. The bookshops inform the District Bookselling Boards, who in turn enquire from all the other bookshops in the district if they needed these books. Failing an adequate response from local bookshops, other District Bookselling Boards are informed of the availability of these books. As a last resort the prices are lowered. However, in order to prevent this situation a good deal of publicity is attempted in the form of posters, book marks, advertisement etc.

(iii) The District Boards also sometimes maintain travelling bookshops for sale of books in rural localities or in

scattered industries. Specially-built vehicles, with a driver-cum-bookseller for each, move on fixed itineraries. All villages on the itinerary are told in advance of the arrival of these mobile bookshops. Sometimes concert groups and lecturers travel with these bookshops. Sometimes the bookshops carry a projector and films with them and the driver-cum-bookseller also becomes a projectionist. These drivers-cum-booksellers are sometimes paid a fixed salary and sometimes paid on commission basis.

(iv) Sometimes persons who may have time to spare carry books to distant localities on a commission basis, usually 10% of the price of a book.

(v) The district Bookselling Boards sometimes organize book festivals, specially for children's books. Such book bazars may last for a month.

(vi) The District Bookselling Boards may also maintain second-hand bookshops. In bigger cities these are independent units, but in smaller population centres they are just sections of the comprehensive bookshops. Libraries, too, sometimes buy their books from such second-hand bookshops.

(vii) School libraries also sometimes act as selling places for books, especially school books.

(viii) Lastly, books are often sent by post on a request from a reader. Every District Bookselling Board has a Department for selling books by post. The postage is, of course, paid by the out-of-the-way buyer.

Some Financial Information

The income of Book Boards is all derived from the 25% commission fixed for them by all publishing houses. A part of their profit goes to the State, a part goes to meet the working expenditure and if some money is left over it may be used for building up the organization.

The transport cost for sending books to District Book-

selling Boards is borne by the Central Board. Over and above this, they give a commission ranging from 10-17% of the price of the book to the District Boards to enable them to meet their expenditure and develop their business. The District Boards are responsible for transport costs within their areas. The District Boards sell books to bookshops at 5% commission. The District Boards also sell books to Book Collectors at 5 to 7% commission, but the Book Collectors give no commission to libraries. Except where commissions are given to individual persons and sometimes to moving bookshops, the staffs of bookshops, and also book collectors are on a salary basis, the salary being fixed by the District Bookselling Boards.

It will thus be seen that the bookselling organization in Russia is rationalised and streamlined. Of course, this is helped by very adequate book publicity through methods well known to booksellers and book publishers in other parts of the world. The success of the organization is proved by the fact mentioned earlier that most books in Russia find themselves in the hands of their readers without having to wait a long time on the booksellers' shelves.

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